



# Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for March 3 – March 9, 2004

Issue 49

United States Agency for International Development

## STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

### Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the elections scheduled for June 2004; and a free and independent media.
- Strengthen government budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote private enterprises.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

### Recent Progress:

- **Elections Commission Created:** On February 24, President Karzai signed a decree establishing an elections commission to oversee the transfer of power from the current Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan to the future elected Government of Afghanistan. As of February 26, approximately 1.2 million Afghans have registered to vote. The UN intends to register approximately 10 million voters for the elections planned for this summer.
- **Paying Government Salaries:** As part of a collaborative effort between Afghanistan's Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance, government employees received their salaries directly from the Central Bank for the third month in a row. In January, the program expanded to include the Ministry of Interior. Each month, a total of 5,407 government employees in Kabul are paid through this system.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Mining Law Drafted:** USAID collaborated with the World Bank and the Ministry of Mines in drafting Afghanistan's official mining law. Once approved, the law will provide guidelines and regulations for the private sector when mining Afghanistan's natural resources.
- **Reconstruction in Parwan Province:** On February 29, USAID Director of the Office of Transition Initiatives David Taylor visited a recently rehabilitated post office in Parwan.



David Taylor shaking hands with Parwan's Governor. A sign in the background states that the post office was rehabilitated by the US and Afghan governments. Photo taken by Shaqir Arapi.

## EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

### Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and 17 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 15 million textbooks printed & distributed for 2004 school year
- 30,000 classroom teachers trained.
- 80,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning programs to reach their appropriate grade level.

### Recent Progress

Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) is a three-year USAID program designed to provide educational opportunities for communities that demonstrate a commitment to education. The program trains teachers, provides textbooks, implements accelerated learning programs, and provides advisers to the Ministry of Education. Primary education programs are underway in the Nangarhar, Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces.

- **Radio-based Teacher Training:** USAID is training teachers via radio broadcasts through seven stations located throughout the country. Currently, six 15-minute programs for first grade teachers are broadcast every week. The programs cover math and language, and in May, will include social studies, science and health, basic teaching methodology, children's rights, as well as a series of dramas reinforcing teaching tactics.

### Recent Progress (continued):

- **Radio-based Teacher Training (continued):** Each program is broadcast in Dari and Pashto languages. Initial assessments of the training program have been positive. In Kunduz 84% and in Nangahar 76% of teachers interviewed listen to the programs regularly and gave enthusiastic feedback.



A teacher training broadcast in session

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## REVITALIZING AGRICULTURE/CREATING JOBS

### Program Goals

- Increased marketable output of \$250 million in agriculture
- More than 500,000 farm family beneficiaries
- A reliable source of water provided to more than 500,000 hectares of land through irrigation rehabilitation
- 1,000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- Construction of over 100 village agricultural market centers.

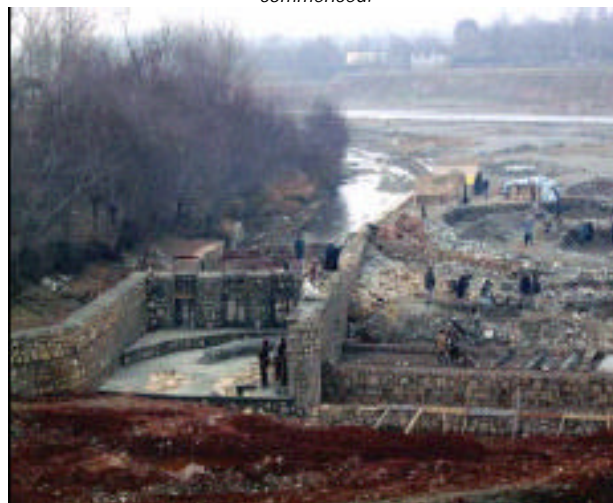
### Recent Progress

USAID's Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) is a three-year program aimed at enhancing the food security and incomes of Afghanistan's rural population. It has two principal objectives, to increase agricultural productivity and output, and to facilitate effective linkages between producers, processors and markets. The program's budget is \$150 million.

- **Darqad Irrigation System:** On March 15, USAID will have reconstructed the Baghlan district's Darqad irrigation system, in northern Afghanistan. The project entails de-silting 12 km (7.5 miles) of the Darqad irrigation canal and reconstructing its primary water intake structures. When complete, the system will provide new irrigation to 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres), and allow for an additional cropping cycle for another 600 hectares (1,482 acres). To ensure sustainability of the newly rehabilitated irrigation system, 80 community members have been trained in irrigation canal management.
- **Women and Agriculture:** Many of USAID's agricultural programs are geared toward improving the livelihoods of women. One USAID program trains women to develop and maintain poultry farms, resulting in increased family income as well as improved nutrition. USAID's program to improve horticultural farms for nuts, raisins, dried apricots and dried vegetables benefits women because they are predominantly employed to sort the products at local markets. Finally, USAID provides assistance to women entrepreneurs through microfinance loans averaging \$200 in value. These loans help women entrepreneurs expand their businesses and provide employment opportunities for others.
- **Rural Microfinance Program Expands:** The Shomali Plain located in the Parwan province in northeastern Afghanistan has traditionally been an agriculturally rich area known for its grape production. Grape farmers in the Shomali Plain are in need of credit to pay for resources—such as fertilizer—that will increase production. In response, USAID is extending its microfinance program to the Shomali Plain, and has targeted five districts in the Parwan province to receive loans. The program is estimated to initially assist 3,400 borrowers with loans averaging \$100 in value. By December 2004, the number of borrowers is expected to increase to approximately 4,700.



August 15, 2003: The Darqad irrigation system before construction commenced.



January 6, 2004: The Darqad irrigation system during construction of its water intake structure.



Sorting almonds in Kabul.

Women loan officers.